

Anthony Smith to run national anti-violence partnership

Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Director leaving to lead Cities United

LOUISVILLE (October 9, 2015) -- Mayor Greg Fischer announced today that Anthony Smith, director of the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, has accepted the position of inaugural chief executive officer of Cities United, a Washington D.C.-based collective of mayors from across the nation working to stop the unprecedented and devastating loss of human life happening in cities throughout America, particularly among African American men and boys. He will begin his new job November 2.

"Anthony Smith has worked tirelessly to make Louisville a safer city and a place of opportunity for all our children and families," said Mayor Fischer. "While I am sad to see him leave, I could not be more proud of him achieving this new leadership role, which gives him the chance to advocate for men and boys of color, and safer communities, on the national stage. We look forward to working with him in his new capacity. The entire country will now get to see the superstar we have had here in Louisville."

Smith was the first director of the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, which Mayor Fischer created in March 2013. Over the past 2 ½ years, Smith, his team and many community members have built a solid foundation to help Louisville be a city where citizens of all neighborhoods feel secure, supported and fully prepared for lifelong success.

Specifically, the Office launched Zones of Hope, a place-based initiative designed to create better educational and employment outcomes for young black men and boys in Russell, Newburg, California, Shawnee and Parkland; the One Love Louisville Campaign, which is a citywide effort to reduce community violence; and the Right Turn program, which secured federal dollars to help 500 youths, ages 16-19, connect to better educational and employment outcomes.

Smith also led a team within Metro Government that implemented a new policy allowing Metro employees to serve as youth mentors for two hours a week.

"I am so proud of the work that we have done here in Louisville to change the odds for all of our youth," said Smith. "I leave knowing that under Mayor Fischer and Yvette Gentry's leadership, the work of the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods will continue to grow and live out its vision: To create a city of safe and healthy neighborhoods where all citizens feel secure, supported and fully prepared for lifelong success. I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Fischer and his team, because I believe Louisville is moving in the right direction and has some promising best practices to share with the country."

Cities United, a project of Tides Center, was founded by Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, in partnership with Casey Family Programs, National League of Cities, Open Society Foundations, and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement. Today, this movement has grown to include 76 U.S. mayors committed to working with community leaders, families, youth, philanthropic organizations and other stakeholders to reduce the epidemic of homicides and violence plaguing African American men and boys. These cities are also focused on restoring hope to their communities and building pathways to justice, employment, education and increased opportunities for citizens.

Yvette Gentry, Louisville Metro's Chief of Community Building, will begin a search for Smith's replacement immediately.

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